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Part I

Thinking about Conflict Transformation

1 Introduction

CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION AND PEOPLE POWER

Conflict can be defined as the friction caused by difference, proximity and movement. Since people and their lives are, fortunately, not identical, isolated or static, conflict between them is inevitable: a sign of life. So often, however, when we think of conflict, we think of pain, misery and death, of the violence and war with which it is so often associated. I would argue that this association is not inevitable, but stems principally from the near-universal cultural orthodoxy that frames human relationships in competitive and dominatory, rather than co-operative, terms: eat or be eaten, beat or be beaten; an approach whose logical outcome is genocide, nuclear terror, star wars.

This underlying culture of domination (Eisler, 1990) permeates the world of economics as well as international relations. The two come together in the arms race, which continues unabated and is fuelled by the economic contest of the arms trade. The needs of ordinary people, so many of whom live harsh and squalid lives, and the health of the planet on which all depend, are marginal to the perceived interests of these vast systems, increasingly operating on a truly global scale.

When the Cold War ended around 1990, it might have been hoped that better days were coming, that disarmament could proceed apace, that adequate attention could at last be given to the needs of the poor and that a new, co-operative model of international relations might emerge. With hindsight, any such optimism can be seen as ignoring the realities of old geopolitical interests and new rivalries, of the dangers of power vacuums and of the social misery occasioned by the collapse of communism. In many unstable regions, ambitious demagogues grabbed the opportunity to promote crude nationalism as a substitute for lost economic and existential certainties. Narrow and exclusivist identities, based on either ethnicity or religion, became powerful weapons in the struggle for survival in the 'new world order'.

With the overthrow of old hegemonies came civil wars and dis-solutions. Although the old Soviet Union was broken up without

much bloodshed, the region has since been beset by wars, large and small, short and long, and the economic plight of most of its people is disastrous. The carnage in Chechnya has horrified the world, though to no avail. Other violent conflicts in the region have passed almost unnoticed, yet continue to threaten lives and prosperity. In the former Yugoslavia, what Judith Large (1997) has termed 'the war next door' turned towns and villages into places of death and reminded Europeans that half a century after the Second World War peace and relative stability cannot be taken for granted.

Meanwhile, in Africa, the proxy wars in Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia and other places, in which hundreds of thousands were killed, maimed and traumatised as the big powers struggled for control of the continent, were eclipsed in horror by the collapse of Somalia, the genocidal massacres in Burundi and Rwanda and the civil wars in Algeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Sudan. As I write, the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo threatens to engulf a large part of Africa. In Asia, the civil war in Sri Lanka seems endlessly intractable, while the winds of change and economic miseries brought about by the workings of the global market have destabilised the whole region, to the point of threatening the break-up of the old, despotic Indonesian empire.

With the old Soviet empire out of the way, and one superpower effectively unopposed, the underlying global contest is now more starkly revealed for what it is: the struggle for economic control and general world dominance. In the West, the 'need' for symbolic enemies is, meanwhile, supplied by the Arab world (often, but of course incorrectly, identified with 'Islam'), whose control of vital commodities makes its 'otherness' threatening and hateful. The ongoing bloody conflict in Israel/Palestine is arguably an old-style colonial war and the deadly terrorist attack on the United States in September 2001 was understood by many outside the West (and indeed within it) as a blow – however cruel and misguided – against the arrogance of neo-colonial tyranny.

Although issues of identity – tribe, nationality, ethnicity, religion – have been presented as the cause of so many recent wars, strategic interests and economic factors often play a fundamental role. In many cases, corrupt governments and rebel leaders use their power for personal gain. Politics and gangsterism are intertwined and the rule of law is weak or non-existent. In some cases this has led to the collapse of government, or its marginalisation, and makes the establishment of democratic systems exceedingly difficult. This is true in

ever more parts of the world, including many former Soviet countries, Africa and Latin America, where violence is by no means the monopoly of states, but is widely used in economic activities, whether by individual gun-owners or private armies. At the same time, the influence – legal and illegal – of wealth over politics in many ‘democratic’ societies, is manifest, albeit dressed in the respectable clothes of the parliamentary lobbyist or party benefactor.

It is a sad irony that many decent people in the privileged West watch with distress the events which, like their own comfort, were, if not predetermined, prepared for and influenced by the conquest, demise and re-formation of past empires. The response of their governments remains a ‘colonial’ one, assuming the right and duty to control events by force, meting out punishment where their authority is questioned and perpetuating the view that violence and disregard for people’s rights are acceptable from the powerful – in short, that might is right (Nederveen Pieterse, 1989).

Too small or ‘atomised’ in its manifestations and at the same time too large and general to be visible in all this is the most widespread tyranny of all, the oppression of women by men. This is not recognised as a ‘conflict’ or ‘mass violence’, because the direct violence takes the form of endless numbers of seemingly isolated acts. It is so ingrained and routine that it is invisible, or at least largely unrecognised by those who benefit from it or who have learnt to accommodate it. It is *the* relationship of domination, which, in its pervasiveness, overarches all others. In the midst of equal opportunities legislation and the rise of women in many spheres in the West, it is perhaps tempting to think that this has changed. Yet the reality is, for many, as bad as ever. In ‘liberal societies’, domestic violence and the economic and political marginalisation of women are still major problems, while in other parts of the world the situation is still worse, and the large majority of women are excluded from many forms of self-expression, participation and power, and suffer untold violence. The cultural, structural, psychological and physical violence to which women are subjected are part and parcel of the culture of domination, which women, alas, often help to perpetuate through the gendering and militarising of their children.

I am painting a bleak picture. Where is the hope? How can anything change if so much is wrong and the systems of domination are so strong and widespread? The paradox is that – in the midst of so much ugliness – kindness, decency and courage survive. People maintain or re-create their sense of dignity and meaning, they laugh,

love each other, care about strangers and hope and even act for better things. Journalists in different parts of what was Yugoslavia risk their careers and physical safety by standing up for tolerance and decency. Human rights activists in Azerbaijan speak out against arbitrary arrest and detention. Community workers in Northern Ireland, voluntary and professional, devote their lives to overcoming the divisions that have bedevilled their society. In different parts of Africa, women campaign for property rights, and for a voice in discussions about war and peace. In Israel/Palestine, people of all ages work for democracy within their own societies and for understanding between them. In the South Pacific there is a region-wide campaign against nuclear pollution. In Colombia, men and women defy competing mafias by declaring their village a peace zone. In England, where I live, the old anti-militarist movement, though small at present, continues in the Trident Ploughshares direct action movement, whose attempts to 'disarm' nuclear weapons systems have been upheld by juries in recent court cases as lawful.

New communications systems not only facilitate multinational business, but also offer new possibilities for organising global movements and coalitions. Perhaps the most notable is the growing movement against global capitalism; but the new international treaty against landmines, and the success of the anti-debt campaign, Jubilee 2000, were also the results of international networking.

Alongside this kind of campaigning and direct action a new field has grown up, most often referred to as conflict resolution. It has been developed theoretically (starting in the 1950s and 1960s) by academics from the fields of international relations and organisational management, who have also involved themselves in practice. In social movements and at the interpersonal level it has emerged in various forms of 'alternative dispute resolution' and 'neighbourhood mediation' – particularly in the English-speaking world. In contrast with the moral partisanship of disarmament and justice movements and their confrontational style, this approach is based on the notion of impartiality and quiet diplomacy, and the idea of resolving conflict through a process of dialogue and problem-solving designed to address the needs of all parties. Although this is a modern field, it has traditional counterparts in many cultures. Its focus is on ending conflict and restoring relationships.

The implied emphasis on avoiding or ending conflict associated with 'conflict resolution' (not helped by such terms as 'conflict prevention') has been a matter of concern for critics. Mindful of the

need to address underlying structural and cultural violence and of the inevitability of conflict in the process of change, they coined the phrase 'conflict transformation' – which is my chosen term. It is used to denote a whole collection of processes and their results: processes aimed at making relationships more just, meeting the needs of all, allowing for the full participation and dignity of all; processes through which conflict may be addressed without violence and either resolved (conflict resolution in the more specific sense) or at least managed (that is, kept within manageable boundaries and with its destructive effects minimised); processes through which hurt and hatred may be mitigated and even overcome, and coexistence made possible; processes for developing a 'constructive conflict culture' (Francis and Ropers, 1997), so that new and ongoing conflicts do not become destructive, but are able to contribute to the well-being of a society.

One of the influences which discourages most people, most of the time, from taking any form of social or political action is the culture of domination which, while it glorifies violence, incorporates the assumption that it is the task of some to rule and of others to be ruled. The culture that produces militarism and military machines, so often used 'in defence of democracy', also produces passive populations who do not participate in their own rule, even where the legal space exists for them to do so. Militarism and democracy are mutually contradictory. 'Conflict transformation', therefore, in the widest sense, will entail not only the shift of specific conflicts from the arena of violence into that of democratic politics, based on the rule of law, but also the transformation of cultural assumptions about the exercise of power: the substitution of *power with* for *power over*, and the assumption of responsibility by 'ordinary people', individually and collectively, for the things that affect their own lives and those of others.

The older field of Gandhian nonviolence has much to contribute to the theory and practice of conflict transformation. One of Gandhi's most important contributions was to revolutionise the theory and practice of power. His *satyagraha*, usually translated as 'truth force', is inseparable from the twin notion of *ahimsa* or 'non-harm'. It represents power as a moral energy, the ability to transform minds and relationships, rather than the capacity to control or dominate through the use or threat of violence. While those who work in social movements are subject to forces beyond their immediate reach or control, and influences of which they may not

be aware, they also have many sources of power for transforming the world around them.

To work for conflict transformation at any level, therefore, involves ensuring that those who have been the subjects of structures of domination discover and develop the power to participate in what affects them. It means enacting democracy at all levels of public life: international, national and local, working in ways that increase participation and help people in all sectors of society to find a voice. It means supporting 'people power'.

The transformation of culture and of social, political and economic structures is an ambitious and long-term project. In the meantime, crises that occur within and because of current attitudes, relationships and systems, demand an immediate response. The domestic and international systems for reducing conflicts at an early stage are often so weak that intervention is only seriously considered when a full-blown 'crisis' has developed. It is argued in many circumstances that military intervention is the only effective means to quell large-scale violence. I believe that a careful review of recent military interventions, even in their relatively short-term outcomes, would largely not support this position. Decisions to intervene militarily are often based on self-interest and on a need to be seen as capable of exercising power effectively, rather than on a more objective assessment of the short and long-term needs of a situation. In any case, I would suggest that pacifists and non-pacifists alike, who are committed to the reduction of human cruelty and suffering, can agree that it is desirable to reduce to the minimum the military and coercive component of any response, and to help maximise the role and effectiveness of those local initiatives which contribute to forms of human security that are self-supportive and sustainable. To the extent that this is done, not only will long-term peace have a better chance, but the wider aim of getting beyond the culture of war and creating new, democratic, nonviolent norms will be advanced.

At the top level of existing political hierarchies, the 'conflict transformation' approach in a crisis is constructive negotiation, with or without the help of a mediator or facilitator. Such negotiation and mediation can be done officially and publicly, or unofficially, behind the scenes. More often than not, presidents and prime ministers are seen to participate in such talks only when the ground has been thoroughly prepared by others. So in the case of the Middle East peace agreement of 1993 (since sadly disregarded and now near to

death), the 'Oslo process' of extended, informal and 'off-the-record' exploratory meetings played a key role, and 'problem-solving workshops' held under different auspices over many years with influential people of different categories contributed to the thinking on which the Oslo process was then able to draw. In Northern Ireland, behind the scenes negotiations had clearly been going on for many years before 'the peace process' became official in the early 1990s.

Secret negotiations at the top leadership level have the important advantages associated with confidentiality – the space to think experimentally, without having to justify every tentative idea to one's political constituency through the megaphone of the media, and the opportunity to build personal trust in the kind of relaxed atmosphere which is possible only in private. The dilemma is that secrecy has considerable disadvantages too. Shifts of perspective that take place behind closed doors through subtle processes in which others have not shared are not easily explained afterwards to the populations that will be affected by decisions based on them. The Middle East case offers a woefully clear example of the need for politicians to have the support of their constituencies when they reach agreements. With so much opposition to the Oslo Accord, it has proved impossible (or at least politically inexpedient) for the Israeli leadership to honour their side of the bargain, and extremely difficult for President Arafat and his supporters to hold the line on what was, for all Palestinians, a pretty poor deal, against the opposition and disruption of Hamas and other militants. And in Northern Ireland there is an ongoing question as to whether the constituencies of the different party leaders will continue to support the peace process if certain things (such as arms decommissioning or proposed changes in policing) do or do not happen.

The transformation of attitudes to conflict and human security requires changes in the assumptions, structures and practices which express and inform governmental and intergovernmental policy and organisation, and the handling of large-scale political crises will involve governments (as well as rebel leaders). Nonetheless, it is clear that, even in the relatively undemocratic societies we are accustomed to, people who are politically active at 'lower' levels can play a vital role, one which, from a democratic perspective, should be strengthened. The focus of this book, therefore, is on the role of non-military, non-governmental actors who want to work for justice nonviolently; to act as peace constituencies in situations of war or open political conflict; to become peace-builders in societies where violence,

hatred, mistrust and antagonism have become the norm, where inter-communal relationships and structures are fractured or exclude certain groups, or where the rule of law and democratic processes have broken down. Their power may be limited, their lives and actions prey to circumstances beyond their control and to the actions of 'leaders' whose agendas they do not share, but they can also have an impact, at every level.

The idea that popular power could be exercised nonviolently was inspired by the life and example of Mohandas Gandhi and his followers, and by the Civil Rights campaign in the US in the 1960s, led by Martin Luther King. It was also developed in the thinking of sociologists and educators like Illich and Freire. The term *poder popular*, which had been used in the Guinean, Angolan and Mozambican violent liberation struggles of the 1960s and 1970s, was translated into 'people power' in the nonviolent uprising in the Philippines when, in 1986, unarmed crowds thronged the streets, blocking the tanks of President Marcos and precipitating the overthrow of a long-time tyrant. It was followed by popular, unarmed uprisings in Bangladesh and Nepal; then in central and eastern Europe, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, which changed the face of the world. The recent overthrow of Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia has shown that people power is alive and well.

The failure of a ten-year campaign in Kosovo/a (written thus to acknowledge both Serb- and Albanian-language spellings and the contested status of the territory) to overcome discrimination and oppression (see Clark, 2000) is a reminder that the large-scale success of popular action is dependent on many factors (some at least within the control of the activists) and cannot be taken for granted. But it is important to question the perspective that sees history in terms of governments, boundaries and treaties alone, or of shifting alliances and the rise and fall of empires, or of the structures and mechanisms of economic power, or even in terms of war and peace. Reality consists also in the lives that are lived by individuals and communities, in particular acts of cruelty or kindness, in the local affirmation or denial of solidarity, in one person's protection or betrayal of another.

The range of opportunities for constructive action is reduced during a violent crisis. It is greater when direct violence is still only a possibility rather than a reality, or once it has subsided. On the eve of war, when the dynamics of intimidation and killing are already under way, the efforts of those who oppose violence may fail to

prevent it – as did, for instance, those of Women in Black and the Centre for Anti-war Action in Belgrade, the Centre for Peace, Non-violence and Human Rights in Osijek and the Anti-war Campaign Croatia in Zagreb, in 1992. Nonetheless, those organisations did, and have continued to do, work that made and makes a difference, contributing to human rights protection, even during the war, providing training and education for constructive approaches to conflict, helping to build bridges between polarised groups and to restore working relationships. They have created small circles of influence and action which will go on widening, changing the ways in which people think and act.

PEOPLE POWER IN ACTION

Conflicts involve actors of several kinds: the immediate protagonists in the conflict; those who have influence upon them, including constituencies for different postures, processes and outcomes; bridge-builders and mediators (not to mention arms dealers, black-marketeers and extortionists, *agents provocateurs* and demagogues who manipulate conflict for their own purposes). It is usual for those concerned with the resolution of conflict to focus on the role of those whose aim is to build bridges and achieve a negotiated settlement, whether through community relations work or mediation or building a peace constituency. I would argue that it is not only those on the fringes of the conflict or playing an intermediary role who can contribute to a constructive outcome. The role of the protagonists is primary and can be constructive. The operation of ‘people power’ in addressing conflict constructively can, then, take many forms.

Nonviolent Action to Confront Injustice

Even when people appear to face overwhelming odds, they can act to challenge the power which oppresses them. The twentieth century provided many striking examples of this, some of which have been referred to above:

- the campaign led by Mohandas Gandhi to achieve India’s independence from Britain
- the nonviolent action by Philipinos to overthrow the tyranny of President Marcos (captured on our television screens as nuns sat in front of tanks and offered the soldiers flowers)

- the school and rent boycotts in South African townships, which finally began to shake the pillars of apartheid
- the disintegration of the communist system in Europe (and Eurasia), when unarmed people took to the streets and insisted that things had to change.

The primary actors in all these cases were those who were the victims of oppression. However, support from outside played a part: mill workers in the north of England supported Gandhi and his followers; those in South Africa who were working for the removal of apartheid were supported by solidarity movements, boycotts and sanctions; and nonviolent activists in the Philippines had received nonviolence training from people with experience in other parts of the world.

Cross-party/Bridge-building Work by 'Insiders'

People from conflicting groups can take action together to represent common interest or to create channels for constructive communication and understanding. Some of the following examples are well known, others less so:

- 'community relations' work and behind the scenes mediation in Northern Ireland which over many years prepared the ground for peace
- the continuing dialogue in Israel/Palestine between those who understand that peace will come only when justice is assured for Palestinians, as well as security for Israelis
- women's action in north-east Kenya which brought the traditional leaders of feuding tribes together in a dialogue and led to an end to the fighting
- groups in Hungary that organised play schemes to bring children and parents from different ethnic communities together
- Radio Kontakt – an inter-ethnic radio station in Kosovo/a, which broadcasts in different languages, letting different voices be heard; with similar media initiatives in Afghanistan, Burundi and elsewhere.

Intermediary Work by Outsiders

People working for external organisations may have a particular role to play in facilitating the re-establishment of constructive communication when a situation is very tense. Sometimes this work is done

with groups of people, often in workshops. At other times it is intermediary work between individuals, as in the first example below:

- unofficial political mediation by Quakers in the Biafra–Nigeria civil war, in the anti-colonial war in Zimbabwe, in Sri Lanka and elsewhere
- the organisation and facilitation of workshops for dialogue and ‘problem-solving’ in the Middle East which prepared future government members and others on the way to the peace agreement currently in disarray; also the ‘Oslo process’ which led directly to the agreement
- the organisation and facilitation of dialogue workshops for young leaders of all ethnicities about the political future of the Balkans
- the organisation and facilitation of training workshops for women from Georgia and the seceded territory of Abkhazia, and problem-solving workshops for their political leaders.

Protecting Human Rights – Acting to Control Violence

Large-scale protection needs to be undertaken by regional intergovernmental bodies (such as the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN)) and the United Nations (UN)). However, there are also examples of small-scale non-governmental intervention to protect human rights:

- peace and human rights activists in Osijek, Croatia, risking their own safety by going to stay with people threatened with violence and eviction from their homes
- multi-ethnic peace teams, with an international component, organised by the same group in Osijek, helping to manage the conflicts associated with the return of refugees
- individuals in Uganda, during the civil war in the days of Idi Amin, taking into their homes neighbours who were threatened with murder and refusing to give them up
- people in Colombia declaring their territory a peace zone and refusing to co-operate with any of the armed factions
- the work of Peace Brigades International, with team members acting as ‘nonviolent bodyguards’, for instance, in Guatemala, protecting those campaigning against political ‘disappearances’, in Honduras and Southern Mexico, accompanying

returning refugees, currently in Colombia, helping to keep a 'space' for human rights activists to operate (though recently under threat themselves).

Building a Peace Constituency

When war or widespread violence is under way, citizens may still act to influence their political representatives and governments to try and bring hostilities to an end. This is a specific form of nonviolent action that involves all the skills of movement-building and designing action to capture public attention. Although they may not always succeed, in the short term at least, they have the potential to do so if they can gain enough support. In the meantime they can help counter more hawkish tendencies. Some examples of such work are:

- the campaign of Peace Now and other organisations in Israel
- the movement to end Russia's war in Chechnya in 1995, led by the mothers of conscripts to the Russian army
- women's and churches' organisations in Sierra Leone campaigning for democratic elections in 1995/96 as a stepping stone towards peace
- the anti-war movements in the former Yugoslavia which maintained their activities from 1992 onwards, throughout the war and since
- the work of *Kacoke Madit* ('the big meeting'), an Acholi movement working for a peaceful solution to the conflict in Northern Uganda.

Education and Training

School lessons which develop tolerance and conflict-handling skills have been pioneered in many countries. Peace studies, under various names, constitute a growing academic field, and the centres which offer them also do important research work, analysing and collating the findings of experience. The role of education in supporting 'people power' is crucial. Its most usual vehicle is training workshops, which provide an opportunity for reflection and skills development, so helping people to recognise and build on their own capacities for peace. Some examples:

- the work of *MOST* ('Bridge') in Belgrade, formed in the 1990s, during the war – classwork in schools, training for teachers and

the development of teaching materials; at the beginning, outside trainers worked with *MOST*'s members – now it is they who are the experts

- the nonviolence training which prepared people in the Philippines for the action which helped to oust President Marcos – done mostly by local organisations, although trainers from other countries made an initial input and continued for some years in a support role
- training for journalists in the run-up to elections in Nigeria in 1999
- training for women in India who work to overcome the violence associated with the caste system and the oppression and abuse of women.

THE NEEDS AND POSSIBILITIES OF DIFFERENT SITUATIONS

Where there is social stability but endemic or structural oppression or exclusion of one group or class by another, not only is there the current, if hidden, violence of injustice, but also the danger of future confrontation and overt violence. In such cases of latent or suppressed conflict there is the need for the creation of political awareness in disadvantaged groups and mobilisation by the oppressed themselves for peaceful change. Those outside the oppressed group may act as advocates for them and for their inclusion in political structures.

In societies characterised by social and political tensions which have not erupted into widespread violence but are in danger of doing so, interventions at the political level, aimed at encouraging political accommodation, constitute one potential form of conflict transformation. Interventions seeking to address the needs of disaffected groups, or to help them become more educated, organised and vocal would be another. (Here conflict transformation and development overlap.) Support for nonviolent action on their part, along with advocacy in relation to the dominating group, would be yet another. And bridge-building work between different communities can help to develop a constituency for peaceful coexistence and accommodation and against political violence.

Mediation may be helpful in a wide variety of contexts and at different levels, from the national political arena to local disputes. Certainly, different conflicting parties will need to be able to enter into negotiations if settlements are to be reached, and skills and principles for constructive negotiation will be needed. In all these

cases, workshops can be used by those who live in the conflict area either as a vehicle or as preparation for what is being attempted on the ground.

Although it is very difficult for ordinary people to take any sort of constructive action when a conflict has resulted in widespread violence or war, many nonetheless have the courage to continue to work for the things they believe in, at whatever level they can. During the 1992–95 war in what had been Yugoslavia, citizens' groups all over the region were campaigning for an end to hostilities and for human rights, working with refugees and educating children in the principles and skills of nonviolent conflict-handling and inter-ethnic respect. Training workshops provided them with a great deal of support – moral and educational – and sometimes offered an opportunity for activists from different parts of the now divided region to meet and encourage each other, comparing notes and discussing their common goals and inevitable differences.

Dialogue workshops or meetings, whose main purpose is to discuss the issues which are being contested in the conflict, are hard to arrange when there is a high level of inter-communal violence. The polarisation which is manifested in and intensified by fighting is accompanied by intimidation against 'collaboration' of any kind, or any attempts to dilute enemy images. But even though at times when the conflict is particularly acute there may need to be a pause, as soon as there is a lull, there are likely to be people prepared to meet and talk – so long as care is given to context (including place and conceptual/political framework) and confidentiality.

At the higher political level the main focus for intervention during violent conflict will be on trying to establish dialogue which is focused on the search for a settlement. Usually this begins unofficially and secretly, often with the help of unofficial mediators (as in Northern Ireland), so that the political risks for the top leadership are postponed and reduced. Problem-solving workshops provide one kind of forum for unofficial, off-the-record dialogue which can feed into and ease the way towards official negotiations and help identify possible ways forward towards a political settlement. At the humanitarian level, training workshops can help those who plan and deliver aid to understand the ways in which they impact – both negatively and positively – on the conflict (Anderson, 1996; Miall *et al.*, 1999).

Once settlement of a conflict has been reached, the tasks of implementing the agreement and of social, economic and political

recovery will extend into every level of society and affect every human life. Many of the issues will be the same as in a situation of tension which has not yet erupted into wide-scale violence; but there will be the added burden of hatred, fear and trauma which result from violence. The 'normalisation' of inter-communal relationships will be hard to achieve.

For a time at least, peace-keepers or monitors from outside may be needed – and training workshops may be part of their preparation. In any case, at the local level workshops will, as at other stages of conflict, provide a forum for dialogue and a means of training which can be supportive of all aspects of the work that needs to be done. They can help provide the ground and skills for addressing the ongoing conflicts that will continue to erupt at every level and in every sphere of social, economic and political life. They can also provide a safe place for the processing of hurt and anger, and a means of re-opening communication between embittered groups and facilitating the development of joint projects. The (re)building of democracy and civil society are likely to be important, and can be seen as integral to the post-settlement or post-violence stage of conflict transformation. Establishing mechanisms and a culture for the peaceful handling of conflict will be an essential part of this. It will be important for reconstruction and development work to be done in a 'conflict-conscious' way, fostering co-operation and equality and minimising the provocation of jealousies. Here again, training workshops have a role to play.

The different kinds of action that may be undertaken by 'ordinary people' at different stages or intensities of social/political conflict are summarised in Table 1.1 (p. 18). Workshops are included explicitly in many places, but they are also the vehicle for many of the named activities (such as bridge-building).

WORKSHOPS FOR TRAINING AND DIALOGUE

Training is the most vital means of supporting effective organisation and action, by multiplying the numbers of people with the awareness and skills required to act judiciously and have an impact. It can be facilitated by people in all three categories listed in Table 1.1 – partisan actors, cross-party workers and third parties – if they themselves have the necessary knowledge and skills. Workshops for dialogue and 'problem-solving' also have an educational aspect in that they help participants learn about each other and generate new ideas for effective action. Lederach (1995) argues that it makes sense

Table 1.1 The exercise of 'people power' at different stages of conflict

Stage of conflict	Partisan actors	Cross-party workers	External actors/'third parties'
Latent/suppressed conflict or oppression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creation of political awareness and growing capacity for self-advocacy by disadvantaged groups • responsible media advocacy • acknowledgement and redress by dominant group • education and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development policy aimed at reducing ethnic stratification • promotion of multi-ethnic structures • bridge-building • education and training • careful media discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitoring of human rights and protection of minorities • encouraging creation of political awareness, capacity for conflict engagement and handling • acknowledgement of underprivileged parties • education and training • lobbying own governments to act constructively by supporting minority rights and development • facilitating dialogue
Confrontation/chronic or sporadic violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working for nonviolent strategies • media stand against violence • mutual acknowledgement of legitimate concerns • direct negotiations • education and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bridge-building • promotion of multi-ethnic structures and loyalties • promotion of nonviolent strategies • media stand against violence and for dialogue • training for all the above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitoring and nonviolent protection • promotion and facilitation of constructive conflict resolution: round tables, pre-negotiations, workshops for dialogue mediation • establishment of institutions involving all parties • education and training • lobbying own governments to act constructively, by supporting dialogue and development

Wide-scale violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working for nonviolent strategies • seeking direct negotiations for an inclusive solution • media voice for ceasefire and negotiations • training for all the above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bridge-building (where possible) • refusal to join in the violence • lobbying for nonviolent strategies • building support for peace • cross-party humanitarian work • media voice for ceasefire and negotiations • training for all the above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitoring and nonviolent protection • shuttle diplomacy and bridge-building • organisation and facilitation of pre-negotiations, problem-solving workshops • mediation • lobbying own governments to act constructively, by supporting dialogue
After wide-scale violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acknowledgement of responsibility; reparation • demilitarisation • participation in reconciliation process • education and training for peace • media support for peace culture • support for democratic process, government, law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bridge-building • facilitation of reconciliation process • social rehabilitation and reconstruction • promotion of a postwar peace culture (media) • promotion of multi-ethnic structures • education and training for peace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitoring and nonviolent protection • facilitation of reconciliation process • support in working through the traumas of the violence • education and training • lobbying own governments to act constructively, by supporting reconstruction and peace-building work and new democratic institutions

Source: originally published in Francis, 2001.

to concentrate these forms of intervention at the 'middle level' of society: those who have some influence, both 'upwards' and 'downwards', while being both free of the political constraints and pressures experienced by those at the highest levels of leadership and not so numerous as to render any meaningful impact unlikely. It is in practice most often at that middle social level that workshops are organised, particularly when they are resourced from outside the country in question. Those who participate are seen as potential 'multipliers', able to pass on what they have learned to those around them and increase the pool of people thinking in certain ways and willing and able to act. Often workshops are organised for relatively young, educated people who are likely to hold positions of influence in the future.

If the necessary skills exist within the group in question, training can be facilitated 'in-house' or by local trainers. However, it may be of benefit to have fresh perspectives and thinking brought from outside. The position of trainers and facilitators in relation to the conflict in question will also be important. To train partisan actors does not require impartiality (or partiality, for that matter), but it does call for a capacity to take some distance from the feelings and arguments at issue. As I have already suggested, where two conflicting parties are brought together for training, or where the primary purpose of workshops is dialogue between them, some emotional distance will certainly be vital for the facilitators, and they will need to be trusted as impartial or non-partisan third parties – either by virtue of belonging to none of the groups involved in the conflict or by being a balanced team of 'insider neutrals' (Hall, 1999).

Coming from outside has its own dangers, and the work of facilitation is full of pitfalls, requiring skill and sensitivity, as later chapters will suggest. The funding, organisation and facilitation of workshops of different kinds is in practice by far the most common form of supportive activity by outside non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and is often financed by governmental and intergovernmental bodies, as well as private foundations.

As the above section suggests, workshops are one of the most-used tools for conflict transformation. They are informal gatherings of people (usually not fewer than twelve and not more than 30) for a time of active thinking and talking together, with some inputs from those who facilitate or lead them, and using a variety of activities to stimulate thinking and encourage participation. They are designed for sharing knowledge, developing skills, learning new approaches

and encountering 'the other'. They can support all those who wish to act constructively in conflict, whether from a partisan, semi-partisan or cross-party, or a non-partisan perspective (see Francis and Ropers, 1997).

Although workshops constitute such an important part of the practical work undertaken in this field, supporting the most legitimate power there is for conflict transformation, there is a relative dearth of literature about them and the challenges and dilemmas associated with their design, preparation, facilitation and evaluation. For that reason they will be given a central place in this book. As Table 1.1 suggests, outsiders go to 'conflict regions' to work in a variety of ways: as human rights observers; monitoring ceasefires; providing humanitarian assistance; and helping in peace-keeping and reconstruction once a conflict has been settled. Much development work is undertaken in areas suffering from violent conflict. Workshops are increasingly used to prepare people who undertake such work. My focus, however, is on workshops designed to support local actors (or activists) who live in situations of violent, or potentially violent, socio-political conflict.

All the different kinds of workshops alluded to in Table 1.1 can be seen as having one of two objectives (or both). One is to influence policy at the highest level, either by feeding in new thinking to the leadership via workshop participants or by helping to create a constituency for certain moves in policy, position-taking or decision-making. The other is to change the ways in which people think and act at the local level, affecting their own immediate environment and increasing capacities for social and political involvement. This second objective is often described as one of 'empowerment' or 'capacity-building'.

I shall continue my explanation under the two different headings: training workshops and dialogue workshops. I shall begin with training workshops and divide them into three broad categories.

Training Workshops

First, there are training workshops which bring together individual participants from different places: people whose social position, employment or personal interests and capacities give them the motivation and the possibility to be active in relation to conflict – usually in their home country but sometimes abroad. Such workshops can be local, national, regional or intercontinental. The wider their geographical scope, the further the balance of benefits

shifts from those associated with a particular cultural or situational focus to those afforded by breadth of perspective, comparison and contrast. The hoped-for result of such workshops is that participants will gain new kinds of awareness and frameworks for understanding different events and contexts, and an increased capacity for constructive action in different situations (particularly their own). Individual participants may choose to keep in touch with each other after the workshop, or there may be some other kind of follow-up; but, as with most forms of education, the benefit of such a workshop is understood primarily in terms of individual learning – which in some cases can be immense and life-changing. The wider the geographical scope, however, the less likely it becomes that participants will continue to work together at the practical level, or that the workshop, through its participants, can have any appreciable direct impact on any one conflict situation. Such workshops can be seen as ‘conflict intervention’ only in the sense that they contribute to the pool of people with enhanced capacities for action in different areas of conflict, whether at home or abroad.

Secondly, there are training workshops organised for groups of people living within a particular place affected by conflict and seeking to increase their capacity to act, at whatever level. The benefits of such workshops lie in their specific, immediate focus, and the likelihood that they will result in increased effectiveness or new activities on the part of participants which, if well considered and well implemented, could have a positive impact on the conflict in question. The participant group will be likely to go on working together, or at least to maintain links, whether it is composed of members of one of the parties to the conflict or members of more than one party who nonetheless hold a common perspective and purpose. These workshops, like those in the first category, can be described as ‘capacity-building workshops’. The capacities they are building may be for advocacy on behalf of a particular issue or group (for instance, work for human rights), nonviolent action in pursuit of some goal, negotiation, mediation, bridge-building between different communities, processes for reconciliation, and work to develop democratic structures and processes. In addition, they may help people to become trainers in all these areas, thus increasing the capability for capacity-building itself.

The third kind of training workshop brings together individuals from different sides in a given conflict who share a rather general will to counter the hostility and violence in which they are caught

up, but who bring with them different and often conflicting perspectives and experiences of the conflict. Such workshops have not only a capacity-building but also a bridge-building purpose. They have, in their goals and dynamics, much in common with so-called problem-solving workshops. They can be difficult and explosive, but can also result in breakthroughs at the personal and the conceptual level. They make, in themselves, a small contribution to detente, to deconstructing enmity, and they can give participants the tools and the determination to go home and act for change, individually or in concert, mobilising others to join them.

Dialogue Workshops

The difference between training workshops of this kind and 'dialogue workshops' is sometimes more a difference in emphasis or presentation than in content, or a question of what is primary and what is secondary. The methodology of workshops is always of interest to participants, and in my experience they always claim to have learnt from the new ways of thinking about and doing things to which they have been introduced. In 'training workshops' these methods constitute the main focus. In 'dialogue workshops' they are vehicles for talking about and understanding the particular problem or conflict in question, which is the primary focus of the workshop. In situations where the latter kind of dialogue would be very difficult psychologically (or politically impossible), it may be an excellent alternative for participants to come together to discuss and learn about some issues which are relevant to the conflict between them, but are addressed in a more general way. It makes it possible to come to the heart of the matter obliquely, and in good time, when the ice has already been broken and participants have formed a community of learning. They may spend the first few days of a workshop applying skills and analytical tools to relatively 'safe' examples, and turn to their own conflict only when they feel confident to do so. On the other hand, in dialogue workshops the time and attention given to the issues which have divided participants is more concentrated and can more easily lead into further activities or action with a direct relationship to the conflict. The very exercise of courage that dialogue demands is important and, it could be argued, gives these workshops greater immediate significance than training workshops, whose impact lies in enhanced capacities for future action.

The kind of dialogue workshop about which most has been written is the 'problem-solving' workshop. These are usually aimed

at people below the top decision-making level but with some political influence, ideally with direct access to those in power and sometimes even delegated to prepare the ground for them. Often facilitated by academics (see, for instance, Kelman and Cohen, 1976; Mitchell and Banks, 1996), they are designed to help the two sides see the conflict between them as a problem they need to solve together and the negotiation process as a joint effort to find ways of meeting the interests of each, rather than a battle over fixed positions. Many of the problem-solving workshops which have been written about were focused on the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, and several of those who participated have subsequently been appointed to government positions. The famous 'Oslo process', in which secret meetings held in Norway prepared the peace agreement which was signed by Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat, while it may not have been described as a 'problem-solving workshop', seems to have embodied the same kind of approach.

At the micro or local level, bridge-building workshops between different groups, whether they come in the guise of training or dialogue, can, like those high-level problem-solving workshops, have a discernible impact, though on a very different scale. For instance, a small project in East Slavonia, which runs such workshops in villages and small towns, has enabled former neighbours of Serb and Croat origin to face living together again, rediscovering each other's humanity and making a joint commitment to work for human rights and to organise income generation schemes. Several small local organisations have been formed in the wake of workshops, so they not only contribute to the overcoming of fear and resentment, but also play a part in the development of 'civil society' by facilitating active participation in social, cultural, political and economic life by ordinary citizens.

Although the knowledge, self-awareness and other skills needed for facilitating workshops can be acquired through participating in them and then simply starting to do it and learning 'on the hoof', their development can be accelerated through special training programmes for trainers and facilitators. This is arguably one of the most important forms of 'capacity-building'.

Johan Galtung (1990) describes a triangle of violence, in which direct, structural and cultural violence all enable and reinforce each other. Workshops for dialogue and training can, when their participants have access to leadership or are able to translate new ideas into public pressure, have an impact at the highest political level where

decisions are made for the ending of direct violence – ‘peace-making’ or ‘negative peace’. They can also contribute to the deeper transformation of underlying conflicts, or ‘peace-building’, by creating the will and understanding needed for institutions and structural relationships to be changed. Much has been written about the dynamics of conflict (for example, Mennonite Conciliation Service, 1977; Glasl, 1997) and the mechanisms of polarisation and escalation which lead, in Glasl’s eloquent phrase, ‘together into the abyss’. Training workshops can enable their participants to become aware of these dynamics and to locate the points at which they can act to transform them. They can also help them to develop the skills and the confidence to do so. Dialogue workshops can address conflict dynamics directly, enabling their participants to transcend them. By challenging old assumptions and perceptions, both training and dialogue workshops can diminish the cultural violence which is used, in Galtung’s words, ‘to legitimise direct or structural violence’ and make it ‘look, even feel, right – or at least not wrong’. And they support people who wish to exercise their responsibility and power, with others, to play a part in shaping their own social and political reality.

TENDENCIES AND TERMINOLOGY

As I indicated earlier, the terminology within this field is confused and confusing. To summarise:

- The field itself is most widely known as ‘conflict resolution’. ‘Conflict resolution’, as an approach and set of processes which led the field and gave it its name, is focused on mediated dialogue which seeks to address the fundamental needs of both or all parties to a conflict. It does not, as I suggested above and will discuss in Chapter 2, address major asymmetries of power and does not use the language of justice.
- The term ‘conflict management’ indicates an approach which assumes that the resolution of conflict is an unrealistic, utopian goal, and that the realistic approach is one that seeks to manage conflict in such a way that it does not become unnecessarily destructive. I believe that at times a conflict may need to be managed and at times the same or another conflict may need to be resolved.
- A ‘conflict settlement’, or political agreement, may be an important instrument at a given point in the management,

resolution and transformation of conflict. It may also be a step towards conflict resolution.

- 'Conflict transformation' embraces the different processes and approaches that are needed to address conflict constructively in different contexts and at different levels, in the short term and the long term, including engagement in conflict as well as its management and resolution. It is the term I shall use when I refer to my own perspective and to the field as I would like to see it, now and in the future. I shall, however, use the term 'conflict resolution' to refer to the field more generally or as it is often seen, as well as to indicate a particular set of processes within the overall scope of conflict transformation.

THE REST OF THIS BOOK

My purpose for the book is to bring together theory and practice. I shall write from the perspective of a practitioner who finds theory both fascinating and essential. This first part of the book is theoretical. Having set out my 'world view' and perspective on conflict, in Chapter 2 I will discuss the theoretical base for conflict transformation, arguing for a combination of conflict resolution and active nonviolence. In Chapter 3 I address the vexed question of the cultural transferability of that theory.

Part II will be focused on conflict transformation as prepared for and experienced in workshops. It will begin, in Chapter 4, with a general discussion of workshop content and methods. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 will provide detailed accounts of three very different training workshops, recorded from my own experience, and discussed in relation to the ideas set out in Part I. Chapter 8 will describe a series of dialogue workshops held in the changing context of events in the Balkans and centred on the relationship between Serbia and Kosovo/a. I shall conclude Part II with a chapter of reflections on the experiences of practice which have been described (Chapter 9).

Part III will be focused on the future of the conflict transformation field. In Chapter 10, I will discuss what I see as some elements of good practice and finally, in Chapter 11, I will consider a variety of cultural, conceptual and political challenges to the field of conflict transformation, arguing that if its vision is to have a future, it will entail radical change in the conduct of the world's major military powers.

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